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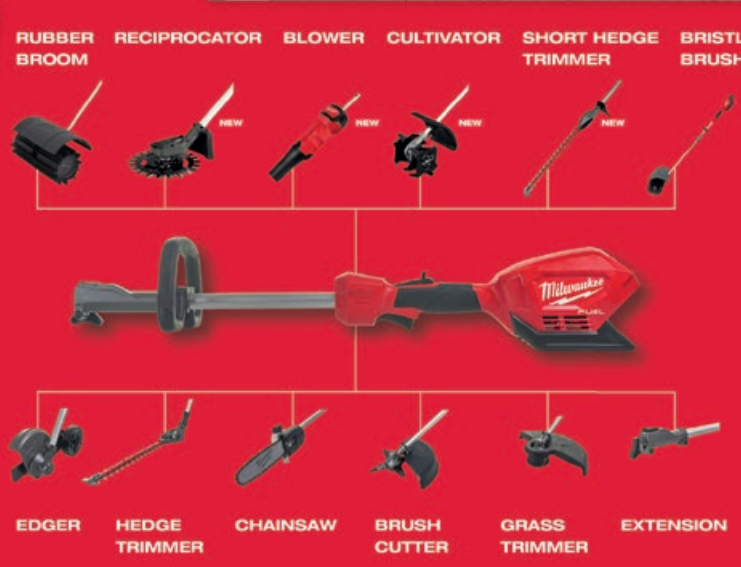
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The year's flown by since the last GroundsFest and we're once again supporting the show's Landscape Zone.

Innovation will be big again as the event promises an even larger footprint. A great space to meet and discover for sure. Our four-page preview overviews a varied programme of presenters (page 24).

New survey findings offer insight into the shape of garden projects to come – some may take inspiration from Chelsea medallists (page 13) where APL and HTA member entries all triumphed as did Darren Smith (page 31) named Contractor of the Year in Marshalls' Register Awards.

It's not too early to be planning your presence at your chosen trade show and helping you maximise impact is Landscaper's coach Paula Warman with her hot tips for success.

One of our premier sports sites, The Hurlingham Club, has rethought its process of irrigating its extensive.grounds, with the environment in mind (page 34) and at last, landscape designers have a viable alternative to boxwood for planters and edging (page 43).

Greg

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Changes sweep across UK gardens



A stack of fresh data just released offers landscapers and designers key insights into how their projects may shape up – and radical change is on the cards, findings suggest.

No fewer than three national polls of homeowners' views and preferences shed light on tomorrow's gardens and green spaces.

The tide's turning against synthetic turf for lawns as homeowners link the material to rising risk of flooding, one survey reveals.

Nearly one in four of 2,000 people questioned in the UK poll wants synthetic grass banned, with a further 57 per cent stating they would never install it in their own gardens.



Research from online trades platform MyBuilder.com, found 24 per cent of Brits want a full ban, while more data from the same source show enquiries for synthetic grass installs had plummeted 48 per cent year on year in 2023. Eleven per cent of homeowners surveyed also admitted flooding was a major concern.

A third (33 per cent) believed measures should limit use of the material, while 57 per cent overall stated they would never install synthetic grass. The over-55s' stance was even harder - 68 per cent would not even consider it.

The Welsh were most against synthetic grass - 34 per cent backing a full ban while in Northern Ireland only 18 per cent did.

Demand plummets

Demand for synthetic grass in 2023 was 66% lower than in the same time period in 2021 but appetite for garden maintenance is higher than ever, rising 15% year on year in May and 87% for 2023 compared to 2021.

Gardener James Lewis, who works with MyBuilder.com, said widespread media negativity and concerns over how synthetic grass affects wildlife, had sparked fears among homeowners.

"After an extremely wet few months, more Brits than ever are concerned about flooding and the damage

it can cause to homes. News that artificial grass can exacerbate the problem will be making potential customers even more dubious about any installation of the product in their gardens," he said.

"While it's not for everyone, and there are some obvious concerns for its green credentials, there are still benefits to having an artificial lawn. We'd advise [homeowners] to carefully weigh up the pros and cons before investing in it." MyBuilder.com has compiled a list of these.

Dream on

Wildlife habitats including natural grass, planters and wildflower meadows top homeowners' wish list for their 'dream garden' – offering landscapers further clues to future projects.

In a recent survey of 2,001 people for hard landscaping specialist Marshalls, real grass, trees, and seating areas (27%) head the list of features respondents want to add to their outdoor space to create a 'dream back garden', with planters (26%), wildflower meadows (25%), storage (25%) and bird baths (24%) closely behind.

For their 'dream front garden', planters and hanging baskets (21%), trees (20%), and raised bedding areas (15%) are favourite, with a new driveway (14%), storage to hide bins (13%) and privacy screening from neighbours (12%) also in the mix.

Significantly, more than two in five now cared more about the look of the front of their home, including the garden, than two years ago.

A swimming pool (9%), bike storage (8%), outdoor gym (7%) and built-in children's trampoline (6%) faired worst.

"Gardens play a huge role in the way we use our properties," said Ben Warren, managing director of landscape products at Marshalls, whose findings are outlined in the Improving the Landscape white paper.

"As those responsible for designing and installing outdoor spaces, landscapers are influential in helping homeowners realise the full potential of their outdoor space.

"These findings give them an insight into exactly what their order books could look like for the next 12 months... and mean more UK gardens packed with biodiverse schemes which cater for all – something we can all agree is a positive step."

And in the teeth of tighter budgets, the data show "simple, naturalistic touches will impress customers most" and what they seek "all link back to sustainability and the protection of our planet".

Gardens matter more

Sizes can vary vastly across the UK but we love gardens, whatever the size, a survey commissioned from YouGov by gardening machinery and equipment manufacturer Stiga reveals.

But one in five of those responding in the poll of 1,010 people had no garden, rising significantly in London (32%) and Scotland (30%) findings that suggest handheld gardening tools are important, "as those with no garden may still have a windowsill or balcony on which to grow plants", Stiga concludes.

Those with gardens smaller than 125m^2 vary far less though - the North (36%), Midlands (32%), East (27%), London (21%) and South (31%).

Choosing a house with or without a patch of green can be lifestyle-changing – a fact the survey bears out with more than 69% of respondents preferring a smaller house with their own garden rather than a bigger house without any outside space in which to grow plants, flowers and vegetables, and spend time with family and friends. London (71%) and the South (76%) differed little.

The care gardens require year round is a responsibility Britons seem open to embrace. More than one in two interviewees (61%) believing that tending their green space would not require much of their time, "but this could depend on the design of the garden or even the machinery technology in which they have invested", says Stiga.



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New HQ positions Stihl for long-term growth



A fresh chapter of innovation and service excellence opened for tool manufacturer Stihl GB recently when it unveiled Contra House, its purpose-built head office and leading edge distribution centre.

Group supervisory board chair Dr Nikolas Stihl headed the opening ceremony for the 11,500m^2 facility, named to honour the Contra chainsaw founder Andreas Stihl invented.

Home to more than 100 staff, the centre is designed to enhance operational efficiency, customer service, and employee well-being, Stihl says, featuring "best-in-class" dealer training facilities and studio, collaborative workspaces, on-site restaurant, and fully-fitted technical workshop to ensure "seamless support" for Stihl GB's 700-strong approved dealer network.

The 9,000m^2 distribution centre houses advanced picking and storage systems to consolidate logistics on one site and streamline operations to provide speedier, more efficient delivery service, Stihl adds.

Unveiling Contra House symbolised a major step forward in commitment to product innovation and providing "exceptional service" to customers and its dealer network, said Stihl GB managing director Kay Green, adding that the facility "not only embodies our rich heritage but also stands as a testament to our vision for the future".

Modern design and functionality blend with dedication to sustainability - the facility achieving BREEAM certification, with photovoltaic solar panels covering two-thirds of the roof area and 21 electric vehicle charging points aligning with Stihl GB's commitment to responsible business practices.

The office and distribution centre is located a stone's-throw from Stihl's previous site – "a deliberate choice demonstrating a longstanding commitment to all employees," a spokesperson told The Landscaper.

"The site has excellent travel links to the M3 motorway and most importantly has the capacity for further expansion, preparing the company for continued long-term growth in Great Britain."

Stihl's product range spans hedge and grass trimmers, multi-tools, pressure washers, construction tools, lawn mowers, lawn tractors, robotic mowers and chainsaws. The Germany-based family-owned business employs more than 20,000 people worldwide and sells products in more than 160 countries.



(L-R) Kay Green, Stihl GB managing director; Dr Nikolas Stihl, Stihl Group supervisory board chairman; Sarah Gewert, marketing and sales executive board member; councillor Pat Tedder, mayor of Surrey Heath.

Urban cover-up spurs biodiversity



A week before the International Day of Biodiversity on 22 May, machinery manufacturer Husqvarna revealed stats gleaned through its HUGSI.green (Husqvarna Urban Green Space Index) programme.

Data on 237 cities with populations above 100,000 in 27 countries were used to compile a league table of the 20 greenest cities in Europe. London was not among them, nor any other city in the UK. Germany notched up no fewer than five in the top 10 listing.

Globally, the HUGSI.green free service is an "objective, recurring monitoring of hundreds of cities [323] in more than 60 countries", said Erik Swan, Husqvarna Group managing director, announcing the results, "monitored on their individual 'vegetative prime day' to ensure data consistency.

"Using global open data sets, we apply the same methodology when analysing cities, to promote benchmarking and collaboration. Data is shared and visualised publicly on the HUGSI.green website," he added.

The service offers an invaluable insight into how urban centres are changing over time and can reveal new construction, tree vitality, the percentage of urban space canopies occupy and loss of green.

Stressing the importance of such surveillance, Erik went on: "It is vital to monitor the proportion of green and blue areas in and around cities [to help meet] the severe challenges of adapting to and managing climate. The solution is more green – trees cool and clear the air and help manage surplus water. Hard surfaces reflect and collect heat and channel water."

To score well, a city should have well distributed, high coverage of healthy vegetation within its populated parts. In terms of "green equity", trees are awarded twice the value of grass, although their "exact formula" is still to be set.

The average urban green space in Europe seems surprisingly healthy at 47%, however, there are 13 million square metres fewer now than in 2021, Erik reported. "Small when considering the total but still huge, an area equivalent to 1,800 football pitches, and that's a problem."

That green index rises to 50% in Nordic countries but falls to 35% in the Mediterranean region and is lower still outside Europe at just 33%. As Erik noted: "Many factors affect this figure. We are not against development but with holistic data we can manage it and reach a balance to create nature positive cities." Athens, Lisbon and Stuttgart are the top three of that league.

Conversely, Istanbul heads the table of green loss (4,643,900m^2) with London ninth (714,900m^2) and Edinburgh tenth.

The service merges factors such as tree health – green, good, yellow, bad and red, dead – with Google Maps street views to gain a ground level picture of exactly what's happening where and how quickly.

Connectivity and creation is key though, Erik stressed, stating that the mission was to foster right conditions for urban biodiversity, "which needs space, specifically green space and the size of that is important. If not big enough, species will not thrive, so we should be classifying cities according to their greenness and biodiversity, finding areas to connect and protect. It's about knowing how to create green space".

Nature connectivity scores are better the higher they are. Globally, that's 22 out of 100 but lower in Europe (19) "even though the continent is generally greener".

R&A Golf It! linkup aids aspiring greenkeepers



Golf It! apprentices Anton Sheilds and Lucy Millar

The R&A's Golf It! initiative introduces people to golf, promoting the game while aiding the local community via a greenkeeping apprenticeship programme The Toro Foundation sponsors.

Set up locally in Glasgow, the scheme could be rolled out nationally as its popularity grows, to support more local communities.

"The R&A's original idea was to provide a facility where people in the inner city could play golf," says Andy Brown, senior manager of global business development and relationships at The Toro Company.

"But we realised there was also the opportunity to introduce the concept of greenkeeping as a possible career choice via an apprenticeship scheme."

Developed by the R&A in 2020 to make golf as welcoming and affordable as possible, the facility has grown into a multi-layered experience for all the family with pitch and putt, adventure golf, putting greens and driving range – all needing a greenkeeping team to upkeep the venue.

Toro was approached to become a founding partner which it agreed to (with sole UK distributor Reesink UK) and provides the turf machinery and irrigation system to maintain playing surfaces at the facility with Reesink providing support and training via its Livingston, Scotland branch.

"Taking our involvement one step further, we now sponsor two apprentices every year for five years," adds Andy. Four apprentices are in place and they're doing very well in their education and gaining plenty of experience.

"They've had the opportunity to go to America and were on the tournament team for the Arnold Palmer Invitational at Bay Hill in Florida this March."

Commenting on the scheme to date, Golf It! general manager Russell Smith said community was "everything" at the initiative. "We're incredibly proud of our two first recruits, Anton Sheilds and Lucy Millar, who view this as the life-changing career opportunity it is and have grabbed hold of it, embraced everything we are trying to achieve and surpassed every goal and expectation."

Toro had bought into the concept of Golf It! "immediately", he added, praising the partnership with their apprenticeship scheme and welcoming the company "actively funding two roles a year for five years, helping us create a bright future for young people in our immediate area".

"This is what partnerships should be about – teaming up to make the world a better place for those who may face limited opportunities otherwise."

Bordering the Seven Loch Wetland Park, Scotland's largest urban heritage and nature park, the initiative is keen to promote sustainability."The R&A, like Toro, is extremely focused on sustainability," Andy explains, 'so part of our commitment was to get as many hybrid and electric machinery options on to the site to reduce its carbon footprint and provide an irrigation system that would manage water effectively."


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Everyone a winner at Chelsea

Association of Professional Landscapers (APL) and Horticultural Trades Association (HTA) members celebrated success with innovative garden design, landscaping and displays at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2024

The RHS hailed the show as its most sustainable yet, with all show gardens eco audited to cut their environmental impact.

Every APL and HTA member entry medalled - more than 20 of the game-changing gongs - including the 2024 Plant of the Year Prunus 'Starlight' ornamental cherry blossom tree with unique white star star-shaped flowers Frank P Matthews supplied.

Nine London primary schools were invited to the show to award the first ever RHS Children's Choice Award, presented to the Octavia Hill Garden, a partnership of HTA member Blue Diamond with the National Trust, designed by Ann-Marie Powell with the Blue Diamond team and created to mark the legacy of social pioneer and National Trust co-founder Octavia Hill.

"All HTA and APL members who built gardens were awarded medals this year - testament to their high-calibre work," said HTA chief executive Fran Barnes, who recorded her pride over so many members highlighting "their exceptional talents with show-stopping gardens, blooming displays and dedication to environmental sustainability".



National Trust Director of Gardens and Parkland Andy Jasper, designer Ann-Marie Powell and Blue Diamond managing director Alan Roper with The People's Choice and Children's Choice Awards

Show gardens

Crocus - Muscular Dystrophy UK – Forest Bathing Garden, gold and best in category
Landscape Associates - The Water Aid Garden, gold
Landform Consultants - The National Autistic Society Garden, silver gilt
The Octavia Hill Garden by Blue Diamond with the National Trust, silver gilt
Landform Consultants – Stroke Association's Garden for Recovery, bronze



The Octavia Hill Garden by Blue Diamond and the National Trust, wildlife pond and Garden Building ©National Trust Images, James Dobson

Sanctuary gardens

Conquest creative spaces – Burma Skin Care Initiative Spirit of Partnership Garden, gold and best in category
Gadd Brothers – The Boodles Garden, silver gilt

Container gardens

Wright Landscapes – The Ecotherapy Garden, gold and best in category
Andrew Ball MGR Changing Tide Garden, gold
Big Fish Landscapes – The Anywhere Courtyard, silver gilt
MAPL Sam Proctor Garden Design – The Water Saving Garden, bronze

All about plants

Atlantes Landscapes – The Bowel Research UK Microbiome Garden, gold
Big Fish Landscapes – The Pulp Friction: Growing Skills Garden, silver gilt

HTA members exhibiting in the Great Pavilion were also awarded Gold medals including Burncoose Nurseries, David Austin Roses, Peter Beales Roses, Primrose Hall Peonies, Raymond Evison Clematis, and Taylors Bulbs. The Blue Diamond group of garden centres gained silver.

A 4-Star Trade Stand award was presented to the HTA and National Garden Gift Vouchers (NGGV) stand, which emphasised the profound impact of gardening, highlighting physical health, mental wellbeing, community and nature benefits.

Chelsea takeaways hold lessons for us all

Well, that's the RHS Chelsea Flower Show over for another year, writes **Phil Tremayne**. APL contractors involved in the showpiece event can breathe a sigh of relief and grab some rest

Chelsea is full on, but as a show for many of our members its an important part of the annual schedule and one in which they can play their part in dictating trends and inspirations for the thousands of visitors and trades that attend.

Chelsea has faced criticism over the years for becoming simply a catwalk, with gardens that are not representative of the public's desires – unattainable, unlike those commonly seen at BBC Gardeners World Live or Hampton Court.

But Chelsea's showpieces have real messages and take homes for the industry and visitor alike. Many of the top designers involved take inspiration from these schemes and use the creative ideas in part in their schemes going forward.

Sustainability was once again high on the list of themes at this year's Chelsea - witnessed as a common theme threading through many of the gardens, including APL members Landform Consultants Ltd garden and the Stroke Association's Garden for Recovery, designed by Miria Harris, which carried plenty of sustainable, innovative materials.

From the start of the design, a sustainable and low environmental impact approach was key, using biofibre carbon sequestration materials such as hemp in the plan in the form of fibre corrugated panels used as cladding for the boundaries of the garden and a prototype hemp composite paving.



Sam Proctor



The project went on to include past traditional techniques, reminiscent of Chelsea many years ago, such as lime-rendered finish on the hempcrete blocks, while the pond and stream were formed entirely from puddling clay to make the scheme concrete, rubber and plastic free.

Something owner Mark Gregory is passionate about and while he admits the landscaping industry has a way to go in some areas, as a sector we are all committed to greater sustainability, he states.

Cement-free concrete featured in the Boodles Garden built by APL member Gadd Brothers and designed by Dr Catherine Macdonald. The material allows complete removal of OPC and achieves CO_2 savings of up to 88% while retaining strength on a par with conventional concrete. Increasingly used in construction projects, it is a real step forward.

Water management figured prominently at the show, with solutions shown on storage and permeability. Sam Proctor's Water Saving Balcony Garden, sponsored by Affinity Water, gave the public some crucial tips on discreet water harvesting and irrigation solutions.

Achieved through a variety of interconnected planters fed with rainwater, this contemporary courtyard space was used to highlight the urgent need to save and reuse rainwater.

On a larger scale, Tom Massey and Je Ahn WaterAid garden, built by APL member Landscape Associates, explored the challenges presented by an ever-changing climate. Focusing on sustainable water management, it also featured a colourful array of plant species designed to deal with varying amounts of rainfall.

The structures in the garden harvest every drop of rainfall and all walking surfaces consisted of open metal decking, so permeable, allowing water to pass though.

RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2024 is already touted as the greenest yet, Sustainability was at its core, new techniques as discussed, but also ground screw piles, repurposing and recycling were common. Rewilding, biodiversity and biosecurity also featured prominently.

Chelsea may be called to task at times for displaying unachievable spaces but if you look past the scale and into the detail of what's on offer, vital information and take-home tips can help us combat the climate crisis and show how professional design, landscape and maintenance can help us all play our part in combatting it.

Phil Tremayne is general manager of APL, the Association of Professional Landscapers.

Photos: Kat Weatherill.



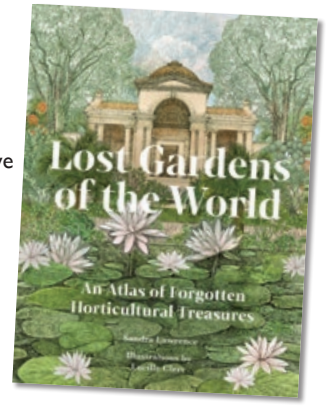
Journey to forgotten worlds

From Las Pozas in Mexico to The Lost Gardens of Heligan in the UK, gardening journalist and author Sandra Lawrence uncovers the stories of a host of gardens worldwide.

In what is an atlas of forgotten horticultural treasures, she notes that these marvels take many forms, from stately homes and floating allotments to roof gardens and more.



While some have been consigned to history, never to be seen again, others have been revived into new lives.



Yet, despite each garden's unique story – they are all united in the mark as 'lost' - through neglect, abandonment or destruction.

Featuring commissioned illustrations of each garden by London-based French illustrator Lucille Clerc, *Lost Gardens of the World* is 'a celebration of our love for nature and the importance of keeping these oases of green flourishing'.

Landscape architects, designers and gardeners will not wish to miss out on a fascinating insight and a romantic journey of discovery into a lost world, newly revealed.

Published By Frances Lincoln in hardback on 3 October, priced £19.99

Horticulturists double kidney charity challenge target

Forty staff at family-run Johnsons Nurseries together walked nearly 7,000 miles for its Move More April challenge, raising more than £1k for Kidney Research UK - double its target.

The annual celebration encourages people to move more and sit less, which the 40 staff who had pledged to walk 100 miles each during the month each certainly did, walking 6,934 miles in 30 days, to raise £1,046, more than twice their £500 target for the charity, which funds cutting edge research into prevention, treatment and managment.

Nine-strong winning team Daffodil amassed 2,057 miles among them, with five reaching more than 300 miles each and senior nursery supervisor Martyn Osbourne alone accounting for 610 of those.

In two other walking challenges Johnsons organised in Move More April, it raised £736 for Cancer Research in 2022 and £550 for horticulture charity Perennial last year.

North Yorkshire-based Johnsons Nurseries is one of the UK's largest commercial nursery businesses - supplying plants and trees to the amenity sector.



Wyevale Plant Healthy... again

High biosecurity standards have earned Wyevale Nurseries a fourth Plant Healthy Certificate on the bounce.

The Plant Health Alliance presented the certification to the commercial grower's production manager Kyle Ross, after a comprehensive independent audit by Grown in Britain, which found Wyevale's measures "robust", he said.

Wyevale launched an internal Plant Healthy Organisation Group last year, with members drawn from its containers, field and container trees and transplants departments, which are responsible for implementing Plant Healthy standards and protocols for their respective production departments.



Wyevale Nurseries' production manager, Kyle Ross, with the company's 2024 Plant Healthy Certificate.

Plant Healthy Certification scheme makes it easier to identify businesses or organisations that trade and grow plants with the highest standards of health and biosecurity.

"It also helps reduce the risk of introducing or spreading destructive plant pests via our trade plant supply chains and protects the horticulture industry, other cultivated plants and natural habitats," Kyle added.

Certified businesses must successfully complete and pass a Plant Healthy audit and show they are committed to adopting high voluntary plant health and biosecurity standards.

The Plant Health Alliance governs Plant Healthy Certification, which is based on its Plant Health Management Standard, developed by specialists from industry, government and the third sector and setting out registrant requirements. Focused on UK ornamental and amenity horticultural businesses and organisations, it can be adopted by international businesses.

The standard provides the framework for – and Plant Healthy Certification recognition of – high levels of plant biosecurity. As well as benefiting individual businesses, it also helps protect the health of plant life from plant pests and diseases to help safeguard the biodiversity of the British landscape and support the UK economy.

Wyevale Nurseries regularly introduces new, award-winning plant varieties. Its main business is to supply garden centres, landscape contractors, local authorities, foresters and landowners with trees, shrubs, hedging, herbaceous and specimen plants.

Put on a great show

Master trade events and reap the benefits, advises **Paula Warman**



Trade shows offer a golden opportunity for landscapers and small businesses in the sector to showcase their services, network with potential clients and stay ahead of industry trends. Mastering them to make a big impact at them requires more than just setting up a stand however.

Here's your guide to exhibiting well, covering everything from utilising partnerships to maximising marketing efforts.

Harness the power of partnerships

One of the most underrated strategies at trade shows is forming partnerships with other exhibitors. Collaborating with complementary businesses can amplify your reach and draw more visitors to your stand. Consider these partnership strategies:

- **Co-hosting workshops:** Partner with a supplier to conduct informative sessions. This not only increases foot traffic but also positions you as an industry expert.
- **Shared promotions:** Co-ordinate with nearby exhibitors to create joint promotions or contests. As a landscaper you could partner with a tool manufacturer for a giveaway, enticing visitors to both stands.

Elevate your branding

Your stand should be an extension of your brand identity. Here's how to ensure your branding is on point:

- **Consistent visuals:** Use your brand colours, logos and imagery consistently across your stand design, promotional materials, and staff attire.
- **Clear messaging:** Ensure your value proposition is instantly clear. Succinct, impactful messaging communicates what sets your business apart.

Craft a stellar marketing campaign

Your trade show success heavily depends on your marketing efforts beforehand. Here's how to build an effective marketing campaign:

- **Pre-show teasers:** Generate buzz by sharing sneak peeks and teasers about what you'll be showcasing. Use social media, email newsletters, and your website to reach your audience.
- **Exclusive offers:** Promote exclusive deals available only at the trade show. This creates a sense of urgency and encourages attendance.

Market your product and your stand

It's not enough to market just your product or service; your stand itself should be a magnet for visitors. Here's how:

- **Interactive displays:** Engage visitors with hands-on demonstrations or interactive displays. This could include live landscaping demos or VR tours of your projects.
- **Engaging staff:** Train your team to be approachable, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic. Their interaction with visitors can make or break your show success.

Maximise your trade show experience

To get the most out of a trade show, you need to go beyond the basics. Here are some advanced tips:

- **Follow-up strategy:** Have a clear plan for following up with leads. Collect contact information and send personalised follow-ups promptly after the event.
- **Evaluate and reflect:** After the show, take time to evaluate what worked and what didn't. Use this information to improve your strategy for future events.

Final thoughts

Exhibiting at trade shows can be a game-changer for any small business. By leveraging partnerships, elevating your branding, crafting a robust marketing campaign and engaging effectively with attendees, you can make a lasting impression and drive significant business growth.

Ready to dominate your next trade show? Start planning now and turn every event into a winning opportunity.

Paula Warman is the Landscapers' Coach, working with landscapers to develop and grow their businesses through her Levelling Up mastermind and 1:1 coaching package. If you need her help please get in touch on the details below to book in for a free discovery call.

paula@thelandscaperscoach.co.uk | www.thelandscaperscoach.co.uk | @thelandscaperscoach

Or, check out Paula's The Limitless Landscaper's Podcast on your favourite podcast player.

Rain gardens rely on Bioretention soil



Transformative regeneration is at the heart of a Plymouth City Centre project to revitalise the key areas of Old Town Street and New George Street.

The £1.6m contract aimed to deliver significant visual and environmental improvements, including 25 new semi-mature trees, islands of greenery, and a sustainable urban drainage system (SuDS) that includes three rain gardens with ornamental planting.

The scheme focused on enhancing the urban landscape, promoting sustainability, and mitigating flood risks through innovative solutions. YGS Landscapes was appointed as the landscape contractor as part of this initiative. They turned to Green-tech, a leading provider of landscaping materials, to supply 160 tonnes of Green-tree Bioretention soil to create the three rain gardens.



This major public realm improvement project involved removing existing surfacing, street furniture and soft landscaping and replacing them with new hard and soft landscaping, street furniture and lighting. It also required the removal of contaminated material, underground obstructions, pre-war historical city features and old utility systems to integrate with modern amenities and drainage systems.

Green-tree Bioretention helped address the project's sustainability and drainage needs. Designed to help rainwater absorption, filtration, and plant growth, the specialist soil played a central role in creating the rain gardens.



The scheme is a key strand of the city's flood management strategy and its Climate Emergency Action Plan as the three rain garden tanks are capable of holding back 75.5 cubic metres of stormwater.

SuDs are designed to protect streets from flooding. On this occasion, the work involved creating large holes in the ground that were reinforced and layered with material to act like a giant plant pot to hold rainwater, which will irrigate the new plants and trees.

Bioretention soil uses highest quality sands and green composts to provide an efficient permeability rate to avoid waterlogging on the surface area while holding sufficient nutrient levels and organic matter to support the vegetation used. The soil's composition "ensures the successful establishment of vegetation and the effective management of stormwater runoff", Green-tech says.

Including the soil in Plymouth's city centre regeneration has yielded multiple benefits. Beyond its functional role in stormwater management, the green infrastructure enhanced the area's visual appeal. Importantly, the project demonstrates Plymouth's commitment to environmental stewardship and climate resilience.

Recharge your batteries through innovation

Switching to cordless technology can power up landscaping in the teeth of tighter regs and rising costs

In just ten years, battery technology has evolved beyond recognition. Improvements in run time, understanding of the total cost of ownership and the drive to lessen our impact on the environment, have given heavy-duty commercial users the green light to transition from petrol.

With insight into how performance, cost and acceptance have combined to create a crucial tipping point for the future of outdoor power equipment, Steve Roskell, marketing director (EMEA) for tools, machinery and battery manufacturer EGO Power Plus, explains the impact of this evolution on end users.

Performance

"Improvements to technology are constantly underway so it's easy to see why favour has gradually slipped away from petrol towards battery power."

However, some users still raise concerns, he says, unconvinced of the transition from petrol or diesel. "Worries over limited run times, charging time, upfront costs and poor performance persist. They were valid once, as were issues surrounding the lack of available robust options for commercial users," he continues.

But commercial charging systems, coupled with power tools such as EGO's Pro X series, developed specifically for heavy-end professional operators like contractors and local authorities, provide the option to switch from the past permanently, he argues, referencing independent feedback to back his case.

"Josh Smith, a presenter for the media platform Machinery Nation, which reviews garden power tool brands, shared his thoughts on the new series: 'After using the new Pro X tools from EGO, I would happily recommend these to anyone looking for high-quality battery garden equipment.

'The 56V battery system did not disappoint! The run times are good, and the power produced was above and beyond my expectations for battery OPE. It's like using a professional petrol machine, without the weight, fumes and fuss'."

Number crunching

Results of a cost comparison test between three Pro X products, conducted by EGO, confirmed that "buying and owning cordless tools is cheaper than buying petrol-powered kit– over a third cheaper in fact. This result has not swayed since we first conducted this research six years ago", Steve reports.

"If a contractor or council is running their equipment for three years, our trio of cordless tools would save them over £1,450 during that period. If they keep the kit for five years, the total savings are an estimated £6,668 compared to the petrol-powered machines." A powerful argument for switching to electric it seems.



Market acceptance

Legislation and regulation are only going one way and that is in favour of battery tools, Steve says. "Our research found that 80% of the petrol-powered tools we studied breached the legal limit for vibrations, meaning that they cannot lawfully be used for a full eight-hour shift. Cordless tools such as the Pro X series do not breach this limit."

Furthermore, large organisations required to report on their carbon footprints are looking to their supply chains and service providers to cut the Scope 3 emissions, he adds.

"Beyond the regulatory landscape, there is another, perhaps even more important reality – user acceptance.

"Battery power is now such a commonplace part of our lives that we understand it and no longer doubt nor fear it. With concerns around price and performance firmly addressed, and cordless tools providing a better user experience, the transition is inevitable."

Up on the roof

Another step in Stockport's £1bn town centre transformation is complete.

The £135m transport interchange, which can take 164 bus departures an hour, has opened to streamline the town's local and regional links in the year it is Greater Manchester's Town of Culture.

Part of a leisure, retail, residential and amenity development in the lee of Stockport's iconic brick viaduct carrying the Manchester Piccadilly to Euston West Coast rail line, the oval interchange is topped with a two-acre landscaped park, the first in Britain constructed above a transport hub.



Complete with play equipment, festoon lighting and community events space, the park connects to Stockport rail station nearby via a walkway and cycle path, with lifts and stairs leading down to the ground floor of the interchange.

An eye-catching spiral ramp provides pedestrian and cycle access to the rooftop site, newly named Viaduct Park, from the banks of the river Mersey, which flows through the town, and the Transpennine Trail.



The park features various herbaceous plantings and trees, seating and hard landscaping including permanent gravel compound pathway circling the central oval void looking down to ground level and ribbon of turf.

The mixed use brownfield development, which also embraces nearly 200 high rise residential apartments, is the latest and largest new development driven forward by the Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) “an innovative partnership that sets a new benchmark for town centre regeneration”, says main contractor Willmott Dixon.

Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham opened the interchange, which features green technologies such as ‘blue roof’ rainwater attenuation system and an array of photovoltaic cells.

The interchange and Viaduct Park are “the real heartbeat of the town’s £1bn transformation”, Stockport Council leader Cllr Mark Hunter said, “and is only the start for our Borough”.

Stockport has figured prominently in several opinion polls recently, being voted ‘The Best Place to Live in the North West by *The Sunday Times*.











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Landscaping key to 'sponge city' future

As urban areas grapple with the rising threat of flash flooding due to climate change, **Hayden Ferriby** argues for wider take-up of the 'sponge city' model



Towns and cities are already going through seismic changes in transport, shopping and reduction in office space due to home working.

But as scientists warn of supercell storms and a rise in flash flooding, planners also need to help communities prepare for extreme weather.

In doing so, they will need to embrace innovative solutions like the sponge city. The concept originated in China in response to severe flooding and uses green infrastructure to manage rainwater naturally, reducing flood risks while enhancing urban aesthetics and biodiversity.

By transforming urban landscapes to mimic natural hydrological processes, cities can absorb and retain rainwater through green spaces like parks, gardens and wetlands.

This not only prevents excess runoff but also reduces the burden on traditional drainage systems. The aim is to create urban environments that function like sponges, soaking up rainwater and releasing it slowly.

At the heart of the sponge city approach are Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS), which incorporate landscaping elements such as rain gardens, green roofs, permeable pavements and detention basins and swales.

Many cities have begun to include these systems in their urban development plans. The Welsh Government has mandated including SuDS in all new developments under its Flood and Water Management Act, which helps ensure sustainable water management practices are integrated into the urban fabric.

Similarly, cities like Stockholm and Copenhagen have brought green infrastructure into their urban planning strategies to enhance climate resilience and improve urban living conditions.

For those involved in landscaping, considering how well a design supports rainwater retention is essential. Effective SuDS design requires a thoughtful balance between functionality and aesthetics. Landscape architects should prioritise features that not only manage water efficiently but also enhance the visual and ecological value of the space. Regular maintenance and community involvement are also key to the long-term success of these systems. Educating clients and stakeholders about the benefits of SuDS can help drive acceptance and implementation.

Ultimately, the sponge city approach is more than a flood management strategy; it's a vision for sustainable urban living. By integrating green infrastructure into our towns and cities, we can manage rainwater effectively, reduce flood risks and create beautiful, functional spaces. As cities like London explore these innovative solutions, the future of urban resilience looks greener and more promising.

For landscape professionals, this is an exciting opportunity to be at the forefront of sustainable urban design. By integrating SuDS into projects, we can contribute to the creation of greener, more resilient cities that enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Hayden Ferriby (inset) is a director at Reimagine Place.
www.reimagine.place

Stiga donates mowers to Bridgwater & Taunton College



Machinery manufacturer Stiga has donated a Collector 136e and Combi 950 SQ AE mower to Bridgwater & Taunton College under its commitment to support horticulture education.

The Cannington, Somerset, land-based centre, one of three main sites, delivers a diverse range of horticultural programmes, full-time, part-time and day courses aimed at school leavers and adults.

These include BTEC Technical Diploma Level 2, RHS Level 2 practical and theory and an array of BTC horticultural courses including garden design, pruning and propagation.

"The mowers will be a great asset to the college and a valuable resource for our practical lessons in helping to give students a great learning experience," said Emma Butler, horticultural course leader.

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Get in the Zone

The Landscape Zone is a dedicated landscaping area within the groundbreaking GroundsFest event, taking place at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire on 10 and 11 September.

The Landscaper magazine is again confirmed as media partner for what is an entire hall dedicated to all those involved in planning, designing and constructing outdoor environments in the landscaping sector.

The Landscape Zone will spotlight latest outdoor technologies, solutions and innovations, making it a must-attend event for landscape architects, local authority landscapers, garden designers, landscape contractors, interior designers, facilities managers and groundcare professionals.

Building on the success of last year's insightful seminar programme, this year's line-up promises to be even more impressive.

Notable speakers include:

- Ben Parkinson - The Garden Project Co
- Hannah Phillips - HP Garden Design
- Ian Jelley - Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
- Karl Harrison - Karl Harrison Landscapes

Key seminars you will not want to miss:

Birmingham: The City of 1,000 Green Spaces

Speaker: Ryan Suddall (Fire Landscapes Ltd)

By 2047 Birmingham, once known as a city of a 1,000 trades, will be known as a city of 1,000 green spaces.

Ryan discusses the work underway in the city to contribute towards the target as well as the progress made to date.



Ben Parkinson



Hannah Phillips



Ian Jelley



Karl Harrison

meets inspiration

Building a Successful Landscaping Business
Speakers: Herman Pobrati (Acacia Gardens), Ben Parkinson (The Garden Project Co), Rob Woodhouse (Solent Garden Services Ltd)
Building a successful landscaping business requires a combination of passion, strategic planning, and a commitment to excellence.

Our panel discusses how you can position your landscaping business for growth and sustainability, using tried and tested methods.



Gini Denison-Pender

Prioritising Pollinators
Speakers: Habitat Aid, Paul Hadley (Paul Hadley Design), Gini Denison-Pender (Beautiful Wild Garden and Landscape Design)
With wild bees and other pollinators in decline, pollinator-friendly planting has never been more important. The panel discusses different planting options available to create an all-year-round buzz in grounds and gardens.

Escape to the Mediterranean
Speaker: Jason Hales (Villaggio Verde)
Ever more people want their gardens to emulate the Mediterranean. Our panel of experts discusses how to achieve this through material selection, planting and designing neutral tones.

How to Incorporate Sustainable Water Management into Everyday Gardens
Speakers: Rob Jones (The Garden Design Company), Hannah Phillips (HP Garden Design)
Join us for this enlightening seminar, when we delve into practical, innovative strategies for creating eco-friendly, water-efficient gardens.

Know Your Niche
Speaker: TBC
Do you know what separates your business from its competitors? In the current economic climate, it's more important than ever to know your niche. Our panel shares their tips and tricks to win more jobs without compromising on price.

Digital Marketing
Speakers: Ben Shaw (Adtrak), John Cutts (Adtrak)





Learn the latest digital marketing strategies and tools to enhance your landscaping business' online presence and attract more customers.

Rising Through the Ranks
Speakers: James Smith (James Smith Landscape & Garden Design), Kenny Raybould (Raybould & Wild/Covent Garden)
It can be hard to make a name for yourself in any industry but our group of panellists are doing a pretty good job so far.

Discover the secrets behind their creative processes, from conceptualisation to implementation and gain valuable insights into the principles and practices that have shaped their careers to date.

Green Solutions: The Landscape Industry's Role in Combating Climate Change
Speaker: Kate Slegg-Newton, WSP in the UK
Climate change presents one of the most pressing challenges of our time - and the landscape industry holds a unique and powerful position in the fight against its effects.

Green Solutions: The Landscape Industry's Role in Combating Climate Change is an enlightening seminar designed to explore how landscaping professionals can leverage their skills, knowledge and resources to contribute to a more sustainable and resilient environment.

Decking: What's Hot and What's Not?
Speaker: Karl Harrison, Karl Harrison Landscapes
Join Karl Harrison as he delves into the latest trends, materials and design innovations in the world of decking. Plus, what you need to know regarding regulations.

Joining the Dots: How Small Actions Can Make a Big Difference for Nature and for People
Speaker: Ian Jelley, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
We're facing an ecological emergency with one in six species in the UK under threat from extinction.

But why should we care? Join Ian Jelley, director of landscape recovery at Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, to hear what nature does for us and see how a surprising number of businesses are taking action for wildlife.

From golf courses to car manufacturers, house builders to cricket clubs - organisations are stepping forward to bring back our wildlife. Will you join them?

This is just a snapshot of the exciting seminar offerings in The Landscape Zone this September.

Exhibitors to Watch:
New exhibitors such as Azpects; Alba Trees; Crowders; Bury Hill Landscape Supplies and Habitat Aid will showcase their latest products.

Returning exhibitors include Boot & Dart, Charles Taylor Trading, Resin Bonded, Groundscare Products, Harrowden, Everedge, Grass Gains, M&M Timber, Tracmaster, and many more.

Additionally, both the British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI) and the Association of Professional Landscapers (APL) will have stands and have partnered with the event. Notably, BALI will be holding their AGM at GroundsFest 2024.

Hands-On Experience:
In addition to The Landscape Zone, GroundsFest offers landscapers a truly hands-on experience in the outdoor areas.

GroundsFest is not just another trade show - it's the only event where visitors can see machinery in action and get hands-on experience with the latest equipment.

This immersive approach allows those attending to gain real understanding of how equipment performs in real-world conditions, making it an invaluable experience for professionals across the industry.

At GroundsFest and in The Landscape Zone, you'll find hundreds of leading brands, each bringing their latest innovations and solutions to the forefront.

Whether you're looking for advanced machinery, cutting-edge tools or the latest in green technology, the event has it all. No other event offers such a comprehensive display of products and solutions for the groundcare and landscaping industries.

Machinery Nation LIVE:
In an exciting feature new for 2024, visitors can witness top brands competing in thrilling face-offs, showcasing the best products in action.

In this new feature by YouTube sensations Machinery Nation LIVE, visitors can expect to see products from Stihl, Milwaukee, Toro, EGO, and Hustler. The new area also features equipment challenges where visitors can compete against friends and colleagues for a chance to win fantastic prizes.

Live Music Festival:
After an informative and action-packed day at The Landscape Zone and GroundsFest, the doors open to the live music festival.

Unwind with live music, street food and fun activities such as bumper cars. Enjoy performances from great DJs and live bands, including the returning Queen tribute band and new acts. The festival area has been expanded to accommodate the growing number of attendees.

Free Registration and Special Prizes:
Registration for GroundsFest 2024 is now open and free for all attendees. Every registrant will be entered into a draw to win a Toro ProStripe® 560 mower. This versatile machine is designed to provide a precise cut and clean striped finish, making it ideal for sportsfields, fine turf applications and residential gardens.



Supporting Education:
By attending GroundsFest, you're also supporting the GroundsFest Education Fund. Profits from the event are reinvested back into the industry to provide invaluable support to students at land-based colleges, ensuring they can overcome specific barriers that might otherwise hinder their educational journey.

The surge in visitor registrations is a clear indication of the industry's excitement for GroundsFest 2024. Thousands have already secured their spots, eager to experience the unique opportunities GroundsFest offers.

Don't miss your chance to be part of the industry's must-attend event. Register now for free at **www.groundsfest.com** and prepare for an unforgettable experience at GroundsFest 2024.

You can also follow GroundsFest on X, Facebook and Instagram **@GroundsFest** for much more news, reviews and insightful views.



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Tools tuned to task in hand

Offering heightened performance for professional users, Stihl's most powerful battery brushcutters in its AP System are a major step up on earlier models.

The FSA 200 and 200 R units deliver 60% higher power output compared to the 135, comparable to the petrol FS 361-C-EM clearing saw – "ensuring efficient cutting performance and offering landscapers a real alternative to petrol machines".

Operators can tailor their cutting style for different materials with the three speed settings to optimise battery life and achieve overall efficiency and precision.

The 200 is geared to long sessions thanks to the professional AV System, with minimal vibration to improve comfort, while ergonomic bike handle features hard-wearing clamping screw to ease handlebar folding for "fuss-free transportation".

Brushless EC motor heightens performance, especially for work on thick vegetation, and automatic blade detection raises maximum RPM when a grass blade's used.

Compatible with various cutting attachments, the brushcutter lets users achieve longer working times with metal and PolyCut blades compared to traditional mowing lines, Stihl says. In-built mesh air filter provides efficient motor cooling, "enhancing durability and lifespan while ensuring an easy clean".

In the thick of it

Replacing the HSA 66 and 86 is the HSA 100, battery-powered hedge trimmer in Stihl's AP System to offer landscapers "elite cutting performance with more comfort".

Its 60cm double-sided, double-edged cutting blades and 34mm tooth spacing are handy for tackling tall hedges with thick branches and innovative anti-blocking avoids jamming by reversing the motor's rotational direction to quickly unblock blades and limit downtime.

The HSA 100 balances easily in use and features a rotating rear handle that locks into three positions across 180° to reduce strain to the wrist over long periods. For added comfort and safety, the trigger is sited on the inside



of the machine's front loop handle. The model also offers "significantly improved" anti-vibration and operates quietly, with up to 150 minutes working time on a single charge, when used with the recommended AP 200 battery.

For landscapers seeking a long-reach hedge trimmer, the HLA 135's double-sided blade delivers clean cutting and is Stihl's most powerful battery hedge trimmer of its kind, offering a 60cm or 24inch blade set.

The magnesium gearbox and 60cm blade set can be adjusted through 145° without tools for head-height, side and ground-level cutting of shrubs, bushes and plants. Ergonomic controls allow the operator to quickly adjust tool speed for the task at hand, reducing energy consumption at low speeds and extending battery time, while the trimmer's light weight gives extended comfortable working.

The FSA 200 and HLA 135 can help teams gather important machine information when equipped with a Stihl Connected Smart Connector 2 A, which records working time and speed setting history accessible via smartphone to optimise tool management and help ensure efficient maintenance, Stihl says.





Power and comfort to brushcut and trim all day

Battery-powered outdoor power equipment specialist EGO Power Plus is expanding its Pro X range with a heavy-duty grass trimmer and brush cutter built to use all day.

The STX4500 Pro X loop-handled grass trimmer and the BCX4500 Pro X bike-handled brush cutter pack a powerful 1.6kW motor and are integral to the new Pro X series - well-balanced for more comfortable all-day working and featuring a 45cm cutting diameter with a 2.7mm line and rapid reload head.

"Garden and groundscare professionals need heavier-duty electric tools that have the power to work all day and the durability to last for years," says product manager Chris Buck. "Our new Pro X range brings the benefits of battery power to a market segment that until now has had to rely on petrol tools – that is no longer the case."



Both models come with a rear-geared motor and are compatible with all portable EGO ARC lithium batteries. They feature carbon fibre drive shaft to reduce weight while maintaining stability and strength and are compatible with the company's metal brush cutter blades and its Rotocut attachment for the toughest tasks.



Three working speed modes with variable speed trigger allow maximum control for any task, while adjustable harness points and tool-free handle adjustment add comfort and convenience, EGO says.

The STX4500 trimmer with loop handle will suit landscapers, facilities managers and municipal users – the rapid reload head and 2.7mm twist line is simple to load with line when empty, reducing downtime in the field, it adds.

With ergonomic bike handles, the BCX4500 brush cutter is balanced for extended use and wide area coverage. Controls are conveniently positioned on the handle and include battery life and speed indicators.

Both newcomers form part of the new PRO X professional series of hard-wearing, powerful tools, which also includes a lawn mower, chainsaw, hedge trimmers and PGX battery charging solution.

Versatility accented in Titan brushcutter

The powerful, lightweight professional petrol brushcutter from Titan blends versatility and power to suit various tasks.

Single-piece shaft, bull-horn handles with vibration suppression for the 43cc engine and full harness offer easy use and safety for the operator.

Professional clutch, quality gearbox on the drive head and strong, ribbed cutter deflection cover to the powerhead help deliver the level of performance landscapers expect.

Available with easy-load bump head and interchangeable heads - weed brush and metal blades, 12-month commercial warranty and full spare part backup.

The gold package includes toolkit and anti-glare goggles, while Titan stocks a large choice of blades, from three to 80 toothed.



Register Awards national winners

Landscape By Design North West Ltd has lifted the coveted Contractor of the Year title in landscaping specialist Marshalls' Register Awards, also taking the fiercely fought Best Large Driveway over 70m² accolade.

More than 400 entries were whittled down to ten national winners – the other eight named are:

- Best Small Driveway Under 70m² – RDW Paving Ltd
- Best Large Patio over 40m² – Gareth R Guck Ltd
- Best Small Patio Under 40m² – Waterdale Landscapes
- Best Project by a New Entrant – Adam Grange Landscapes
- Best Use of a Natural Stone Product – Garden Grafters and PB Landscaping
- Best Use of a Made in Britain Product – Manor Prestige Landscapes
- Best Engineering Achievement – Glenn Humphries Landscaping Ltd

Contractor of the Year was decided by fellow contractors and industry peers, who voted online to select their favourite from the national winners projects, featured anonymously on the Marshalls website.

"This year's calibre of entries was more impressive than anything we've ever seen," said Tom Foster, Marshalls' trading director for landscaping. "Landscapers know the vital role they play in making [places] not just special but truly outstanding in design: the many projects submitted proved that.

"All our winners have demonstrated they strive to set new benchmarks in what consumers can expect from their landscapers."

Darren Smith, owner of Landscape by Design North West Ltd, said: "Hundreds of installers and businesses across the UK are part of The Marshalls Register of Accredited Landscape Contractors and Driveway Installers, a national network of independent professional landscaping specialists."



"I knew straightaway landscaping was right for me"

Contractor of the Year Darren Smith talks to Greg Rhodes about his winning entry in the Marshalls Register Awards and market moves.

How did you get into landscaping?

"I left school early at 15. A job had come up around the corner from my house, working with a local landscaper and I felt immediately it was right for me. I worked with them awhile before realising I wanted to train properly. "I sat my qualifications and went to Myerscough College for three years, studying landscaping and horticulture. After that, I started work with another local firm then in 2020, aged 20, I decided to set up my own business, specialising in patios, driveways and full garden design, which includes turfing, planting, decking and outdoor lighting."

Tell me about your winning project

"The client had a very large driveway, which needed redesigning. At 450m², there was a lot of paving space

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to cover but they also required a turning circle with a stunning central feature.

"I used Marshalls' Sawn Versuro Setts, a premium product which is incredibly durable, and had each stone of the turning circle bespoke cut to fit the radius. Because of the levels of precision required, it took six months for all the stones to be cut.

"I also recommended adding a granite border to the driveway, which the client really appreciated. As the final touch, we added a £30k bonsai tree to the middle of the turning circle, which was imported from Holland and required a crane to be lifted into the driveway."



What made the scheme so special?
"Projects like that one don't come along every day. It was unique and a really large space. Having every stone bespoke cut means there is no other driveway like it, and the addition of the bonsai tree makes it stand out just that little bit more. This is the first time in 16 years that a driveway project has won the Contractor of the Year category."

Any other projects you are proud to mention?
"Four years ago I won the Best Collaboration on a Project category in Marshalls' Register Awards, alongside Jason Clark at Classic Paving.

"We worked together on a project in Cheshire installing a zoned garden including a sunken hot tub, seating areas, decking and planting. We added lighting across the whole space too. It began as a very basic 150m^2 garden and we turned it into something really special.





"Another standout project is one I managed in Rochdale - sunken spa, outdoor kitchen, pergola, turfing, planting and outdoor lighting."

How important was it to win?
"It was incredibly special to be recognised by my peers. Winning the top prize means I've impressed the best landscapers in the country - my competitors – enough to earn their votes, so it really counts a lot."

How's the market moving?
"Homeowners want low maintenance contemporary gardens. Porcelain products tap into this, with around 95% of my paving projects using them. I have porcelain at home - it's seven years old and looks as good as the day it was installed. It's a premium product but customers are willing to pay the extra for it because they know it lasts and looks good."



"Indoor/outdoor living will remain on the agenda for some time. The garden is an extension of the home, another space to enjoy your down time, so outdoor entertaining spaces will continue to grow in popularity.

"It's just a shame those of us in the North West can't enjoy it as much as we'd like, given our regularly bad weather! The climate here also makes working outside challenging but I'd never change it for the world because I absolutely love my job."

Judge's comment
Keith Wrigley, Marshalls Assessor for Darren's area: "Darren is a worthy winner of this award and it's great to see his peers vote for this fantastic project - a huge one to take on but all challenges were expertly handled and the finished result is stunning. The quality of this work is a testament to Landscape By Design North West Ltd."

Hurlingham taps into drip feed

Managing 42 acres of finest landscaped grounds and award-winning sports surfaces sustainably is no mean feat for the Hurlingham Club's grounds and gardens team



The club's diverse natural landscapes include sensitive, historic areas, ornamental lawns and paths, hedging, herbaceous and mixed borders, rose beds, lakeside and wet area planting alongside the Thames.

World-leading sports turf facilities see action year round, including grass tennis courts for members and showcase courts for pre-Wimbledon events. Manicured croquet lawns, finely preserved bowling greens, cricket pitch and 9-hole winter golf course complete Hurlingham's varied provision.

Leading the 26-strong full-time grounds team are Neil Harvey, head of grounds and gardens, deputy Tom Clarke and head gardener Aby Parrott, who steer established eco-friendly horticultural practices that include running cordless equipment and machinery, soil composting and mulching, compacting and recycling green waste, generation of bio-fuels, rainwater harvesting, shedding chemical pesticides, utilising biodegradable materials and eradicating single use plastics.

Conserving water throughout Hurlingham's extensive irrigation regime is a key component of the team's management strategy. The two-acre lake is the water source - its quality maintained by sophisticated lake aeration and filtration systems.



At the heart of the irrigation management is a central computerised control system which enables the team to program, adjust and monitor watering schedules for different areas, optimising water usage and preventing evaporation during daylight hours by irrigating the grounds overnight.

More than 270 fixed sprinkler heads satisfy sports and landscape irrigation needs throughout the estate. For 20 years, Hurlingham has worked closely with sportsturf, commercial and residential specialists Holts Irrigation, project head Andre Holt recommending and installing Rain Bird 950, 750, 8000 and 5000 series rotors with MPR matched precipitation nozzles across all areas.

The show tennis court and croquet lawns were fitted ten years ago, the golf course rotors some 12 years ago and other surfaces in the intervening years – proven technology running reliably and consistently.

Drip irrigation

The gardens team is moving over to drip irrigation, favouring Dripline for delivering low pressure watering applied slowly and precisely to plant root zones in well-mulched areas. Running through the day, the system matches soil infiltration rate to eliminate runoff, wind drift and evaporation wastage – also avoiding risk of damaging delicate plants such as roses by misdirected spraying.

Some two kilometres of Rain Bird's low water volume surface XFS Dripline stretches across the estate, rolled out by Holts in new areas and to replace spray irrigation. The dell that surrounds Hurlingam's historic ice house, featuring curved flower beds and contoured landscaping, is one of the latest areas to benefit.

"Dripline unobtrusively ensures the necessary hydration with minimal environmental impact," states

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Andre Holt. “Its advantages include simple layout, pressure-reducing emitters that regulate water flow and a good range of lock-type compression fittings.”

Rain Bird's TBOS II BT Bluetooth battery-operated (IP68 rated) controllers work alongside Dripline in many areas of the estate where mains power for irrigation controllers would be too costly or impractical to install.

Bluetooth allows Aby and the team to use smartphones with the dedicated Rain Bird App to pair with the controllers. They can configure watering schedules, usually for two hours a day in summer, and monitor performance. Sequential start times, seasonal adjustment and rain delay programming all promote close control over water consumption.

Operating Dripline during daylight hours under separate TBOS II control also removes the onus of taking additional time for irrigation scheduling through the central computer.

To further improve efficiency, a weather station and soil moisture sensors let the team fine tune irrigation schedules, based on actual weather forecasts and soil conditions to prevent overwatering and unnecessary operation.

After two decades servicing Hurlingham’s irrigation needs, Andre is considered a full member of the grounds and gardens team. His service contract, product knowledge and installation expertise, coupled with his



understanding of the club’s sustainability values are thought to be vital.

From reconditioning the booster pump set for the irrigation system, to replacing and repairing sprinkler heads, pump servicing and proposing aeration systems, his support is set to continue to make a significant contribution to Hurlingham's environmentally friendly horticultural practice.

“We place strong emphasis on regular maintenance of the irrigation infrastructure, as well as continuous assessment of new water saving opportunities" says Tom. "The team can cover quick fixes but Andre’s experience and service will continue to be indispensable.”

Floors Castle greens weed control

Labour-saving, more eco-friendly weed control had become a priority at Floors Castle, ‘the gem of the Scottish borders’ and centrepiece of the 18th century beautiful Roxburghe Estate.

Tasked with keeping the four acres of picturesque castle grounds and gardens pristine for the visitors flocking here from far and wide is head gardener Simon McManus and his team of three.

“The walled garden comprises four big herbaceous borders and we also have a small vegetable garden as well as private gardens which aren’t open to the public – all needing to look good year-round,” explains Simon, who has been at Floors Castle for almost 20 years.

An “impressive” demonstration of Weedingtech’s Foamstream L12 system dispelled “some initial scepticism



for the new technology but the results of the trial spoke for themselves and since our purchase last year, we have only discovered more and more benefits”, delivering a less labour-intensive, non-herbicidal method of controlling a variety of weed species.



Hot water is the active ingredient, insulated by a 100% organic, plant-based foam to keep the liquid in the kill-zone for long enough to eliminate weeds and other unwanted vegetation. The compact, portable ‘plug and play’ delivery system, with wand options, allows operators to apply the L12 across the board.

“It’s used regularly throughout spring and summer,” says Simon. “One day in April we treated a border thick with weeds, which once would have taken the four of us a day to clear. A two-hour treatment and by next morning they were all dead.” The machine also kills the moss and algae that were becoming a problem to treat with the continuing withdrawal of chemical solutions, Simon adds.

“Over winter, when weeds are less of an issue, we found we could use the L12 as a pressure washer to clean the roof of the glasshouses. This machine will become a key part of our overall maintenance programme.”

Mountfield reimagine the SP185

Mower manufacturer Mountfield has been busy again to design a battery version of its SP185 petrol mower.

Pop the battery in and you are ready to mow with the SP185Li. Adding the benefits of battery power to the proven SP185 creates a self-propelled machine Mountfield claims "makes mowing a breeze".

The cordless mower offers "significant power for all your cutting needs" thanks to the mono powerhead with 1 x 48V 5Ah battery - with space to hold a spare battery there too if you want.

A 46cm cutting width and six cut heights, easily adjusted from 22 to 65cm using the central lever over the rear wheel 400m^2 adds mowing flexibility.

The SP185Li comes with 60l grass collector plus 'full' warning indicator to ensure fewer trips to the waste bin or compost. The anti-scalp comb helps produce a fine finish for lawns up to 400m^2 (equivalent to one and a half tennis courts) on a single charge.



Battery and charger are included with the SP185Li, which carries a five-year manufacturer's warranty. Fold down the handles after use, then pop the battery on charge ready for the next mow.

Hire to buyer seeds Letchworth success

Routine and recovery seeding demands had tightened at 18-hole Letchworth Golf Club, thanks to high traffic, poor weather and construction projects, steering course manager Rob Groves from hiring to buying a seeder for the tasks.

The GKB Combiseeder he bought from dealer Ernest Doe has raised both convenience and efficiency for both Rob, who came into post in May 2022, and his four full-, one part-time greens team, which handles day-to-day duties and larger renovation projects.

"The bunker renovations and new irrigation system involved using heavy machinery on and around the greens," Rob explains. "We hired a seeder - not only expensive but also means you are restricted on when you are able to get it – often not at the right time. With areas to recover, along with combating general wear and tear, the time was right to invest in our own machine."



The CS120 features a "tried and trusted" combination of two spiked rollers and two adjustable brushes to deliver and encase the seed for optimal germination. Delivered on a wet Thursday in March 2024, it was out the following Monday and the next three consecutive days, delivering seed into the surfaces as part of the club's renovation week.

"I'd used the Combiseeder at my previous club and was always impressed by how simple it is to operate and adjust, allowing us to overseed the greens with finer, smaller seed and use it on other areas." Rob continues.

"Our grass-covered driving tees, for example, which would need divoting and seeding by hand at least once a week. Now we can do the whole area in one pass, saving valuable labour hours. We also plan to use it on the greens, without seed, as a sarel roller as it's got the right weight to give us some good aeration in the top of the profile without being too aggressive."

The seeder's already proving "a great investment", Rob reports. "Despite the weather, we saw good strike from our March operations. When you factor in the opportunities and benefits of conducting overseeding more frequently, together with the savings on hire and labour, the Combiseeder will pay for itself in no time."

Golfers and greens teams find common ground

Electric machinery has heralded improved productivity from all-day maintenance at Hillside Golf Club. Now the Southport club has added four more electric Toro all-electric eTriFlex 3370 greensmowers and two Toro Workman GTX-Lithium utility vehicles to its fleet.

After first investing in eTriFlex three years ago to shed risk of hydraulic leaks on greens, the team favours the mower as much now for its low operational noise, allowing them to mow all day.

"The way golf clubs mow has changed and it's no longer always possible to fit in all the work we need to do before play starts," links manager Chris Ball explains – due to a post-Covid rise in members and visitors and the commonly held view that rounds played over the same course take longer than they once did, he adds.

The R&A Pace of Play guide concurs, stating course maintenance during play is necessary and adapting maintenance schedules is vital to minimise negative impact on pace of play and golfers' enjoyment.

"Work needs to happen all day and the solution is silent electric power," Chris states. "Our electric mowers allow us to work around members and guests without disturbing them. We can get in right behind tournament play as it happens - essential in keeping on top of the course throughout an event."

Sale cost was a big factor originally, yet was an unknown then. Toro's new cost calculator, designed to compare operating expenses of alternative energy-powered machines, reveals that using the eTriFlex over five years will save £10,153 compared to its diesel equivalent.

"There's number crunching to be done but I'd say we're well on the way to that," Chris gauges.



Hillside Golf Club's links manager Chris Ball, right, with Reesink Turfcare's Mike Turnbull and one of the club's new Toro all-electric eTriFlex 3370 greensmowers.

"Absence of downtime and lack of repairs required are particularly noticeable, and how easy and quick maintenance is. And that's without factoring in reduced running costs and no fuel."

Under Hillside's wider sustainability mission to use less water, fewer inputs and spend less for the same outcomes, it also specified the electric utility vehicles for bunker work such as raking to run alongside mowing throughout play.

"It's important to make the investment now to reap the benefits in future," Chris concludes. Choosing electric machinery has been an integral part of that commitment.

Loader "big step in Westminster's electric journey"

Latest moves in Westminster Council's commitment to environmental stewardship include transitioning its groundcare machinery from petrol to electric.

Benefitting from that switch are the 27 acres of green cover and diverse amenties in historic Paddington Recreation Ground.

Opened in 1888, the parkland draws more than two million visitors annually to its sports facilities, gardens, and leisure spaces.

To ensure upkeep and meet evolving demands of sustainability, the council, with leisure contractor Everyone Active, is choosing innovative solutions such as Avant's e6 electric multifunctional loader.

"Westminster Council is keen to move our petrol machinery over to electric ones," says landscape and security manager Stephen Scott, "highlighting a shift towards a greener, more sustainable approach. We were at 20% electric in 2019, now 86% in terms of our equipment."

Twelve years at the site since starting as a gardener, Stephen leads a team of eight landscapers to keep the

park prime for those who throng here. “This is a truly wonderful place,” he states, ‘that's why I have been here so long. We are fortunate it receives a lot of investment from Westminster Council, so it is always improving.”

Seamless in the transition to electric, the e6 combines power, versatility, and eco-friendliness. Powered by a 13.8 kWh lithium-ion battery, the loader includes 2.8m lift height and 900kg lift capacity. Silent operation and zero emissions make it a fine fit for busy urban environments like the recreation ground.

"The e6 has been a Godsend ever since we acquired it," Stephen says, “from green waste disposal to heavy deliveries, proving its versatility time and again.”

Team member Simon Carrig is a fan too. "We use it every day without fail," he says, using attachments ranging from buckets to claws, to help enhance efficiency and productivity, “and can complete all our jobs done throughout the day on one charge. The cab is comfortable and a heated seat keeps it warm in winter.”

The robustness and agility have impressed him. "I have



put it to the test believe me," he says, “lifting heavy items and navigating tight spaces easily.” Low maintenance needs and reduced noise emissions add to more favourable working, while eco design and adaptability help the loader remain a key asset in keeping the park pretty while reducing its environmental footprint.

Ree.own mowers create lasting impression at Braehead

Braehead Golf Club has sourced Reesink Turfcare's Ree.own service for its cost-effective solution to updating turf machinery.

Head greenkeeper Harvey Harrower has been at the Alloa club for 38 years and says going second-hand wasn’t a worry: “One of the things we like about using Toro is that they’re built to last.

“Like most other clubs, we look to buy machines every five years, but unlike the bigger clubs, we tend to search the second-hand market. The fact that our new ones could already be six or seven years old doesn’t concern us. Those we’re replacing are 15 years old, and we have other Toro machines that have been going for over 20 years.”



Harvey Harrower, Braehead Golf Club head greenkeeper, seated on the Toro Greensmaster TriFlex 3420, with Reesink’s Neil Mackenzie.

The Groundsmaster 4300 and hybrid Greensmaster TriFlex 3420 came to Braehead via the Ree.own scheme, a dealer network providing access to quality Toro turfcare machinery in the UK and Ireland.

Those rehomed are guaranteed to have under 3,500 hours on the clock, used for fewer than seven years and been through a rigorous multipoint check by Reesink’s expert turfcare technicians.

“This isn’t the first time we’ve sourced second-hand machines and it certainly won’t be the last,” says Harvey. “Because of the club’s finances, it’s the option that works best for us and the machines still perform at a really high level. They go through the workshop and are refurbished before they get to us – ours also came with a 12-month warranty.”

Both machines replaced equivalent models the club had used, with one key difference. “We chose the hybrid model of the 3420. You can slow the speed down and it just gives a better finish,” says Harvey, a fact the club’s active, expanding juniors section appreciate, he adds.

“The club has built new tees and reserved tee times every Sunday throughout the year to allow them to play and learn on the best quality surfaces from the outset.”

Ready for the new season?

The Grounds Management Association (GMA) represents professional and volunteer grounds staff and partners with four sports governing bodies, for rugby union, rugby league, cricket and football through the GMA's Pitch advisory service (PAS).



Tom Rowley

Each of the four dedicated teams work with community clubs, organisations, and local authorities to improve the quality of their playing surfaces. Tom Rowley heads the seven-strong contingent for football which, like the other three, works to key performance indicators (KPIs), set by each governing body and the GMA.

Each of the NGBs have adopted the GMA's Grounds Management Framework (GMF) in order to set tangible and measurable KPIs. The GMF sets out in an easy-to-digest way the national standards for grass surfaces across football, cricket and both codes of rugby. It explains what skills and knowledge level grounds staff need to achieve these standards.

With the NGBs investing heavily in supporting clubs, along with advice available through the GMA, "there's never been a better time for grassroots sport to access support for grounds machinery, works and expertise", Tom states.

Using the Football Foundation's PitchPower app, clubs input data on machinery, maintenance performance quality standards, grass and weed cover and root depth to allow Tom and his team to grade pitches and provide relevant advice and guidance in order to improve pitch quality. Ten thousand such assessments have been completed since 2020, Tom reveals, with another 1,000 plus face-to-face visits.

Football pitches in England alone number some 40,000, three in four of those grassroots ones, and are mostly maintained by volunteers.

"Any club eligible for a Football Foundation grant is expected to put two personnel through the GMA online Level 1 football grounds maintenance course, which lasts four to six hours," Tom explains – "part of the PAS programme is to upskill groundspeople."

By the end of May, elite clubs are well into their renovation programmes, although they want to sweat the asset by staging events at stadium sites. "The weather always presents a challenge – perfect conditions are warm, dry with a bit of moisture. A humid atmosphere creates potential for disease."

Although tempting, grassroots clubs with no access to irrigation should consider holding off major renovation work until September, avoiding the heat of summer potentially, Tom advises.

"Scarifying removes as much thatch and organic material as possible but should only be considered if adequate means of irrigation are available. This should then be followed by applying sand or topdressing – ensuring compatibility with indigenous soil.

"Grassroots clubs with limited budget should apply one to two tonnes of top dressing to low lying or heavily worn areas – this should provide best value," he adds. Although supply chains have proven challenging, rising prices are making this element of maintenance one of the costliest, even for elite clubs.

"Compaction of playing surfaces is the number one issue at grassroots level and we often witness poorly draining pitches, partly due to the use of heavy rollers, which deprive the grass plant of oxygen and water, aggravated by extensive use. Weeds such as plantains can then populate thinly covered areas or bald patches.

"Deep aeration with solid tines helps decompact pitches by fracturing and fissuring the ground to encourage air pockets – ideally reaching down 200mm and to 100mm spacing. Linear aeration, using horizontal continuous slit vibration is an alternative but can cause cracking in heavy clay soils. Aerating two or three times a year is needed. The majority of grassroots pitches tend to be clay based rather than constructed for football.

"We recommend a dwarf perennial ryegrass mix for overseeding, usually containing at least three different cultivars for wear and disease tolerance, cold weather germination and drought resistance.

"Applying around 35g of seed per square metre is about right for overseeding by hand spreader, drill or tractor-pulled disk seeder – 2 to 3mm into the ground followed by brushing sand dressing into the pitch in three directions to ensure coverage.







"Mid-season renovation is undertaken more by elite clubs," Tom says. "Our key aim is for pitches to keep good grass cover for longer." That said, undertaking work "little and often" is a good idea, "and we recommend a mini renovation in September time, when there are still soil temperatures and a bit of moisture.

"Seeds should germinate after a week – irrigation is key at this time but is few and far between at grassroots level. Germination sheets can help retain moisture but if clubs do irrigate, it should be done early morning or in the evening, and ensure deep not shallow watering to access the soil profile adequately."

Following a soil analysis, Tom advises, if budget allows, applying a pre-seeder fertiliser followed by a controlled or slow-release fertiliser under a phased approach over a three-to six-week cycle, reapplying two or three times a year.

"Irrigate within 48 hours of applying fertiliser. Planning is vital here. Reading the weather is key for grassroots clubs without a watering system. And start planning your renovation in January to ensure your contractor is available when you need them."

Take care over weed control, Tom cautions. "Broad spectrum selective herbicides need to be applied by fully qualified operators, who are not usually on hand at grassroots level, in contrast to elite clubs. Avoid applying them six to eight weeks either side of seeding. Clover for example flowers in June so it's prudent to wait until grass establishes, and no mowing three days either side of fertilising, which should always be done in calm conditions and not in drought."

A former groundsperson at Leicester City FC, Tom is one of the GMA's leading authorities on football pitch care, applying his in-depth knowledge of sports turf management by helping grounds teams improve football pitch standards nationwide.

For free online groundcare toolkits visit:
https://resources.thegma.org.uk

To learn about the GMF visit:
https://thegma.org.uk/GMF

And to level up your skills this summer, check out the GMA's grounds management courses, available online and designed for all levels:
https://portal.thegma.org.uk/education/courses/search





Groundbreaking solution for Phytophthora

Arborists and gardeners alike know about the devastating effects of Phytophthora or water moulds.

Several hundred number under the Phytophthora species of oomycetes and are reportedly the most destructive cause of root rot and stem base decay in trees and shrubs, second only to honey fungus.

Member species also cause enormous problems for crops, bedding plants, pot plants, herbaceous perennials, and all types of woody plants.

Above-ground symptoms include wilting and branch dieback, but these are often not apparent until the root decay is well and truly advanced. It may also be there are other factors at work below ground. Examination of roots might show a poor root system, but Phytophthora are microscopic, so there will be no evidence the organisms are the cause. Laboratory examination may be needed to decide if it is Phytophthora root rot or waterlogging, with which it is usually associated. Either way, improving drainage greatly reduces the chances and risk of the disease.

Such was the case at an extensive property in Farnham, Surrey. The owner had planted between 150 and 200 new yew trees only to lose them to Phytophthora. It was decided to replace them but the spores remain living in the soil.

One solution is to destroy affected plants and replace the root run with fresh topsoil but Phytophthora may remain at depth. The solution in the Farnham garden was provided by Terrain Aeration with their Terralift deep aeration system and the owner's treatment with a liquid product when rain was imminent.

While the product does not kill Phytophthora, it stops it from spreading. Terralift's probe reaches a metre down,



where it releases compressed air to fracture and fissure the soil in interlinked stages.

The resulting aeration allows water and air to reach the roots and the water to drain, so no waterlogging. Applying the liquid product over the top of the roots would result in wasted run-off.

Fracturing at a metre depth, however, creating fissures that allow the liquid to be washed in by the rain to percolate root areas, delivers an effective combination.

Masterline fresh look

Professional Masterline pro-turf seed mixtures are sporting fresh packaging designs. Seed grower DLF has introduced the new look for the 5kg, 10kg and 20kg bags after full redesign of its corporate visual identity in early 2023.

"The updated design not only reflects the company's dedication to innovation but also underscores its mission to provide customers with top-tier products that meet the highest standards of both quality and performance," DLF says.



Boxwood blight "can't touch Bloombux"

Absent from this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show was a once firm favourite – box, and with good reason.

The traditionally popular bush is food for the native Asian box tree moth, now gaining a stranglehold in the UK. The caterpillars do most damage between March and October so a mild autumn might spell more generations of the pest than usual this year.

"Box growers now face this insect across the whole of the country," says RHS senior entomologist Dr Stephanie Bird. "Gardeners may need to make tough decisions, considering which plants they love and want to retain versus replacing with an alternative."

Landscapers face that dilemma too but as the Society warns of a bumper year for the Glyphodes perspectalis boxwood blight after receiving a fivefold rise in reports of outbreaks this year compared with last, help is at hand.

How best to tackle the moths was reportedly the most frequently asked question for the RHS team at Chelsea, who were quizzed on alternatives.

Ornamental Bloombux – a species of rhododendron – is emerging as a frontrunner, the hardy perennial immune to onslaught by voracious box caterpillars.

With its spectacular blossom and neat, dense foliage, Bloombux's lime tolerance allows it to thrive on nearly any well-draining garden soil - starting to shine in late spring, when lavish blooms will attract admiring glances.



The bee-friendly pink and magenta flowers can reach up to 8cm in diameter during the May to June peak season – in containers or beds and borders. Once the flowers fade, emerald-green evergreen foliage looks good throughout autmn and winter, making Bloombux a strong option for boundary hedges.

The plant resists low temperature (-24°C) far better than boxwood and only reaching up to 70 centimeters is easy to care for and won't run out of control. Pruning is best done after flowering to retain new flower buds for the next year. Bloombux is widely available in UK garden retailers.



Telescopic shears a cut above

Fast, clean pruning without manual pulling is the promise from Milwaukee Tool for its M18 brushless telescopic shears.

Accenting productivity, the shears reduce peak muscle activation, allowing operators to complete challenging applications faster than manual solutions, the company states.

Optimised for extended reach bypass pruning to deliver "the best cut quality for vegetation health", the M18 shears provide the power to cut up to 44 mm thick branches and feature ergonomic adjustment collar for quick, easy length adjustments from 2.1m collapsed to 3m fully extended.

The attachment-free extended reach raises ability to complete long-reach applications and when paired with its red lithium high output 5.5 Ah battery pack, the shears, fully compatible with the M18 line, can complete up to 2,000 cuts in 2.5cm softwood per charge in 44 mm thick branches.



OAS tees off Stressgard for golf sector

Promising to "transform the care of turfgrass", biostimulant Fiata Stressgard®, sold in the UK solely through Origin Amenity Solutions (OAS) contains compounds that activate plant defence mechanisms and enhance turf health, resilience and overall performance.

Developed by turf solutions manufacturer Envu, the biostimulant contains a pigment that instantly enhances turf colour and plays a crucial role in long-term stress management, says OAS, Envu's UK partner, which is targeting golf.

By reflecting only harmful light, it helps optimise photosynthesis and energy production, preventing the breakdown of chlorophyll. Proprietary plant health compounds "promote turf health under the most stressful conditions".

Key benefits

Proven to deliver elite turf performance when the grass plant is under stresses such as high temperatures, drought and traffic, it helps surfaces stay healthy and vibrant during peak stress periods and enhance recovery.



Complements any integrated turf management programme. Components within are proven to prime turf plants for stress and disease resistance by triggering stress-responsive genes.

Instant colour and long-term photosynthesis enhancement. With 10-20l/ha application rate, can be tailored to give exact colour response required to elevate turf appearance and manage stress.

Fiata Stressgard® is the latest product to include technology that had been tested extensively across various environmental conditions for more than 25 years and was scientifically proven to protect turf all year long, said Phil Logan, Envu UK & Ireland national account manager.

OAS plant protection products team lead Mark De Ath said the biostimulant would help greenkeepers and turf managers "promote turf grass health, colour, performance, and resist biotic and abiotic stresses".

Fiata Stressgard® comes in 9.46l containers and is suitable for golf courses, sportsfields, bowling greens, parks and residential or commercial sites.

Blower's power compatibility "a standout"

Comfort and functionality blend with high-performance brushless motor and battery system in Makita's UB003C 36V blower to deliver a maximum air velocity of 86m/s and long run times.

Lightweight and comfortable, the unit delivers 24N average blowing force, up to 17.6m³/sec air volume and air velocity up to 86m/sec. For clearing large areas, it can provide up to 60 minutes continuous run time from a single charge, possible by attaching Makita's backpack battery system to the machine, for all-day work and performance without using petrol or power cables.

The UB003C can be connected to either the PDC1200 (33.5Ah) or PDC1500 (43.5Ah) portable power packs as part of Makita's ConnectX system, or to its PDC01 battery backpack (all sold separately).

The blower features three-stage telescopic nozzle with 100mm adjustment range, while its tilted nozzle reduces reaction force and recoil, cutting impact to the arm. Options include variable speed, cruise and constant speed control.



"The UB003C's compatibility with our ConnectX portable power packs makes this blower stand out," states Matt Chilton, Makita UK product manager, "enabling maintenance professionals to complete larger tasks easily, with up to an hour of high performance operation."

Arborist road tow unit packs processing punch

Crown Tree Services has bolstered its fleet strength and performance by upsizing its road tow unit with a GreenMech EVO 205D.

Set up in 2015, Crown offers the full range of tree surgery and arboricultural services to domestic and commercial customers in and around Norwich and Norfolk.

Local dealer Thurlow Nunn Standen demoed the eight inch 205D after Crown owner James Basey-Fisher had been thinking about upsizing and upgrading his six-inch primary road tow unit. "We were seriously impressed," James recalls. "It has outstanding pull and processing power, can tackle all types of timber and brash and sits nicely behind the truck, giving us a great set-up for work in residential areas."



The 205D extends the EVO concept of more powerful bite, torque and throughput. Its deep beam, high tensile steel chassis is said to deliver tremendous strength and robust reliability, while the generous in-feed hopper ensures free-flow of large brash and bulky material.

"It complements our existing tracked woodchipper really well," adds James, "and has become our go-to day-to-day machine for jobs that demand strength with reliable power and performance. It's clear the design has regular upkeep in mind. The chip chamber fully hinges open to allow good access to the flywheel, and things like the replacement of filters and changing between blade sets is simple with more space to work in.

"Also, aftercare in general has been second to none. We rely on our equipment and need it running at its best. Knowing we have that level of support from TNS and GreenMech is a huge plus."

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